

## Farmland Protection Program

*By: Jodie Huls, NRCS Communications & Marketing Intern*

According to government figures, every hour approximately 365 acres are gobbled up by sprawling land development. In most communities, the amount of developed land is growing faster than the population.

Farmland provides worldwide contributions to environmental quality, protection of the Nation's historical and archaeological resources, scenic beauty, and above all, a valuable food resource. As urban sprawl continues to threaten the nation's farmland, the government continues to take action to protect our productive land.

Because of these growing concerns, the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 established the Farmland Protection Program (FPP). Under this act, \$35 million in financial assistance was provided for the purposes of permanently preserving agricultural lands, limiting the conversion of farm or ranch land to nonagricultural uses. Eligible land includes farm and ranch land that has prime, unique, or other productive soil, or contains historical or archaeological resources.

The 2002 Farm Bill, signed by President Bush on May 13, 2002, re-authorized FPP and made it an even more of a national concern, dedicating \$50 million for 2002. "This increase in funds makes it clear that protecting farmland is a national priority, one that we need to support here in Illinois," says NRCS State Conservationist Bill Gradle. Currently, Illinois has no state legislation and little county level legislation to support this program or take advantage of this federal funding. "We'd like to see more state and local units of government or qualified not-for-profit organizations take the necessary steps and position themselves so that we can get these federal funds put to good use right here in Illinois," adds Gradle.

In order to take advantage of this program federal dollars, state and local governments and private organizations with an established program designed to protect farmland and must submit a written proposal to their NRCS State Office by July 15, 2002. The proposal must include a description of the organization's farmland protection program, records of

acquiring and holding permanent agricultural land protection easements or other interests, and a description of the lands to be acquired with assistance from FPP. More importantly, ***there must be a pending offer to purchase the development rights or conservation easement for the property.***

The NRCS will place a priority on land under increasing urban development pressure and organizations with extensive experience in managing and enforcing easements. Within 30 days after the Request for Proposals has closed, the NRCS State Conservationist will award eligible entities. Once selected, the landowner must work with NRCS to finalize and sign cooperative agreements, incorporating all FPP requirements. Selected entries can receive no more than 50 percent of the appraised fair market value for each conservation easement from FPP. For help in preparing your FPP proposal, contact State Soil Scientist Bob McLeese at (217) 353-6643 or e-mail: [bob.mcleese@il.usda.gov](mailto:bob.mcleese@il.usda.gov).

## Sleep Well; Our Resources Are In Good Hands

*By Paige Buck, NRCS State Communications Specialist*

I recently attended the 2002 State Envirothon competition held here in Illinois and I must say that just being a witness to this event, to this gathering of young adults, has been nothing less than inspirational. For those of you that don't know what the Envirothon is, let me briefly define it. High School teachers across the state work for months to orient and prepare students for an intense battery of competitive exams that cover in-depth examination of the following categories: wildlife, forestry, aquatics, and soils. A fifth subject area is revealed every year, allowing the Envirothon experience to dive into current topics and issues. Just like basketball team playoff tournaments, students within county Soil and Water Conservation Districts compete. Winners from the SWCD level compete within their regional Land Use Council boundaries, and then the final winners from each LUC move forward and compete in the state event to determine which team will represent the state of Illinois in the national competition. Winners receive scholarship monies, special trips, and other valuable prizes.

*(continued on page 6...)*

## Thoughts to Ponder . . .

By Bill Gradle, Illinois NRCS State Conservationist,  
Champaign, Illinois



On May 13th, President George W. Bush signed the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 into law. While most farmers and those involved in the agricultural side of life have anxiously awaited this landmark legislation, most Illinois residents probably fail to appreciate the true significance of it.

The bottom line is that this legislation serves as the rulebook and the game plan for producers for the next seven years. Crucial decisions like what to plant and what programs to apply for are contingent on the details of this legal document, which I believe is about 500 pages in length. In addition to commodity choices and federal support systems for America's farmers, this legislation lays the foundation for our nation's commitment to conservation. And that's where we come in.

This bill represents an unprecedented investment in conservation on America's private lands; nearly \$13 billion over the next six years. It offers the most dramatic growth in the EQIP program, with more than \$5.5 billion more dollars to put conservation on the ground; it breathes new life and funds into farmland protection and dozens of other valuable programs.

So what does this new Farm Bill mean to the small and large communities and towns of Illinois? What does it do for you? Well, obviously it will put dollars into the pockets of local farmers, which will fuel movement and life in your local economy. But it will do more than that.

The programs and dollars the federal government dedicates to conservation may directly assist and support our farmers, but they indirectly assist and support every single one of us—even city dwellers. Conservation supports efficient ag production which keeps prices at the grocery store down; it protects wild lands, livestock operations, and plant and animal species that put food on your table and medicines on your shelf. Conservation saves soil which maintains life on the planet as we know it. Conservation keeps soil where we need it and it keeps sediment and chemical pollutants out of your drinking water.

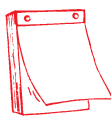
The Farm Bill is not just another piece of legislation that creates a lot of paper and supports only a few people. It just made conservation a national priority. And it just made sure our nation will remain a quality environment and a quality home for a few more decades.



## Read The Newsletter Online

Remember! This newsletter is available online at [www.il.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.il.nrcs.usda.gov). Click on "News" and then on the purple button for "Newsletters". If you currently receive this resource through the mail, and would prefer to read it from our homepage, please let us know so that we can save on printing and mailing costs. Thanks!

## Events, Workshops, Meetings, Conferences . . .



**Defending the Integrity of Ground Water: The Impact of Natural and Manmade Disasters**, July 10-12, 2002, Washington, DC. Sponsored by the National Ground Water Association (NGWA). Call Julie at (800) 551-7379 x 530 or visit [www.ngwa.org](http://www.ngwa.org) for more information.

**"Setting the Pace for Conservation," 2002 Annual Conference, Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS)**, July 13-17, 2002, Westin Hotel, Indianapolis, IN. Call for Papers and Interactive Sessions. Visit <http://www.swcs.org> for more details.

**StormCon--The North American Surface Water Quality Conference and Exposition**, August 12-15, 2002 at the Marco Island Marriott, Marco Island, FL. For information on the conference or to submit a paper, contact Janice at (805) 681-1300 x 12 or visit [www.Stormcon.com](http://www.Stormcon.com) for details.

**Illinois Association of Resource Conservation & Development Areas Annual Meeting**, Aug. 27-28, 2002, Olney, IL in the Wabash Valley RC&D Area. For more info contact nedda.simon at [simonsez@theramp.net](mailto:simonsez@theramp.net)

**"Integrating Remote Sensing at the Global, Regional, and Local Scale,"** Nov. 11-15, 2002, Adam's Mark Hotel, Denver, CO. Sponsored by the American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing and International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing. Visit [www.asprs.org/Pecora-ISPRS-2002](http://www.asprs.org/Pecora-ISPRS-2002) for details.

**2002 Midwest Environmental Education Conference, "Something to Give, Something to Gain,"** Nov. 21-24, 2002, Andersen Center for Professional Education, St. Charles, IL. Visit [www.eeai.net](http://www.eeai.net) for details!



## Conservation Terminology

**BIOMASS**--The total amount of living material, plants, and/or animals above and below the ground in a particular habitat or area.



### NRCS Directory



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Plainfield, IL 60544  
PH: (815) 577-3597 Ext. 6

Visit NRCS' Internet Homepage at:  
<http://www.il.nrcs.usda.gov>

**Chicago Partnership in Resource Conservation**  
Contact: Bob Jankowski, DC  
1201 S. Gougar Rd.  
New Lenox, IL 60451  
PH: (815) 462-3106

**East St. Louis Partnership in Resource Conservation**  
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100 N. 8th St.  
East St. Louis, IL 62201  
PH: (618) 271-9540



To contact your local County NRCS office, look in the phone book under U.S. Government, Department of Agriculture or the NRCS website.

# NRCS Profile: James Rospopo, NRCS District Conservationist

*By: Jodie Huls, NRCS Communications & Marketing Intern*

Jim Rospopo learned at an early age he wanted to work with conservation and the environment. "During the 60's, which was during my impressionable age, the first Earth Day Movement was taking place" Jim said. There were many Public Service Announcements aired on television at the time, but there was one commercial that had a particularly strong impact on Jim and that he feels actually helped shape his future. "There was a commercial where an Indian was walking around, looking at pollution on the landscape. As the camera slowly zoomed in on his face, the very last thing you saw was a tear rolling down his face." From those memories, Jim took with him an interest in the environment and the hopes that someday he could make a difference.

Later, Jim's interest only grew as he enrolled at Purdue University. He graduated in 1986 and received a BS degree in Natural Resources and Environmental Science. As Jim entered the "real world," he decided that the Soil Conservation Service would offer him the chance to use what he had learned in college. Unfortunately, just as Jim started to look for employment, President Reagan ordered a federal hiring freeze. Even as the hopes of a steady federal job became less likely, Jim decided to learn more about the agency and join the SCS team in a different way--Jim became an Earth Team Volunteer.

While volunteering certainly had its rewards, Jim still had to earn a living. He found a job at Shoal Creek Country Club and worked feverishly to get the golf course ready for the 1990 PGA Championship. "All of our time was spent redesigning and maintaining the golf course getting ready for that one event," Jim said.

In 1990, the hiring freeze was lifted and job opportunities were finally opened. Jim's patience was rewarded with the opportunity to become a Soil Conservationist in Birmingham, Alabama. After Birmingham, he transferred to Marion, Alabama as a Soil Conservationist and later became a District Conservationist in La Fayette, Alabama. Jim then became a District Conservationist for Floyd and Pike Counties in Kentucky, which then led him to Woodstock, Illinois as a Soil Conservationist. This lengthy journey ultimately led him to his new position as District Conservationist in North Cook County, IL--serving the conservation needs of one of Chicago's "collar counties."

Since May 20<sup>th</sup>, Jim has settled into his new position and is setting goals for his team. One goal is to re-establish a relationship with municipalities within the District. "This office has not had a full time DC for a while," Jim said. "So some contact with these municipalities has been lost. I look forward to the opportunity to re-establish communication and move forward." Jim's commitment to conservation is propelled by the idea that you must be honest and fair to those you are dealing with. "You can't promise them the world if you can't deliver it."

## Conservation Concepts...



### ...Green Roofs ...

*By: Jodie Huls, NRCS Communications & Marketing Intern*

With miles of asphalt stretching across the county, urban expansion seems to be an epidemic. Increased amounts of pavement and concrete leaves stormwater to wind its way over concrete lined streets and parking lots, picking up pollutants and sediment until it finds a stream or lake. But there are technologies designed to offer solutions for those concerned with the environment but who feel helpless to make a difference from their location. The solution: **Green Roofs.**

A green roof is an innovative technology used in place of conventional roofs. It consists of watertight, lightweight and long lasting layers of materials that reduce storm-water runoff, improve energy performance, and extend commercial building roof life. They support soil & plant growth, making economical & environmental improvements to conventional roofs.

Two types of green roofs are Eco-roofs and roof gardens. Eco-roofs are popular because they weigh less than roof gardens. Soil depths in Eco-roofs range from 1-5 inches. Weights vary from 10-50 pounds per sq/ft. They usually are equipped with small, low-growing plants that thrive in shallow soil and retain water in roots and leaves, allowing them to withstand harsh rooftop conditions (high winds, intense heat and no irrigation). Maintenance is typically minimal—once a year.

Roof gardens are designed for public use and often serve as parks or terraces where building occupants can enjoy an outdoor oasis. Soil depths range from 6-12 inches in support of a variety of plants—even shrubs and trees! The weight ranges from 80 to 150 pounds per sq/ft. Unlike Eco-roofs, roof gardens usually require extensive maintenance. The true key to any type of successful green roofs is the selection of plants that will thrive in the local climate and conditions.

A green roof offers many benefits for building owners, such as extended roof life (approximately three times longer), which reduces maintenance and replacement costs. A grass rooftop, for example, seldom exceeds 77° F, whereas a conventional flat roof can reach 140° F in the summer. Conditions like this can significantly improve the building's energy performance. Some studies show that dropping roof temperatures by 3°-7° F can result in a 10% reduction in air conditioning requirements, which means major savings.

Another key benefit is the ability to retain between 15-70% of roof stormwater runoff. Increasing amounts of impermeable pavement and buildings in our communities has caused water tables to drop, drying up wells and streams. Rooftop vegetation holds water, instead of allowing it to race through storm drains and accumulate where it is not needed.

The additional cost for a green roof ranges from \$8-\$15 per sq/ft. Costs are generally recovered through benefits and savings. This proves that strategies such as green roofs are increasingly important as urban sprawl continues to consume land. Green roofs simply allow a little more of what nature intended in a place that's not so natural. To learn more about this idea, visit [www.greenbuildingservices.com](http://www.greenbuildingservices.com).



## WEB DIRECTORY



[www.epa.gov/owow/](http://www.epa.gov/owow/)  
[www.scenic.org/growth.htm](http://www.scenic.org/growth.htm)  
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[www.waterwise.org](http://www.waterwise.org)  
[www.eelink.net](http://www.eelink.net)  
[www.sprawlwatch.org](http://www.sprawlwatch.org)  
[www.chicagowilderness.org](http://www.chicagowilderness.org)

## It's Not ME!!

*Taken from Jan. '02, Issue #67--Nonpoint Source News-Notes*

### Polls Reveal Continuing Misperceptions

Perceptions of who's responsible for water pollution haven't changed much in the last six years, according to the polls conducted by three different organizations.

Only 15 percent of those polled recently by the National Geographic Society were aware that their own actions might affect rivers and watersheds, whereas a survey by the National Nonpoint Source Forum six years ago revealed about 19 percent saw themselves as responsible for water pollution.

Both surveys found that people identify industry as the biggest polluter of waterways: 44 percent in the National Geographic poll, 48 percent in the Forum survey. A Roper poll for the National Environmental Education Training Foundation in 1999 confirmed this misperception of the major cause of water pollution. Less than half (47 percent) of the Americans Roper polled believed that run-off pollution is the biggest threat to water in their area.

The good news: Nearly one in five (20 percent) responding in the National Geographic poll support protecting and conserving rivers, although most said they didn't have much time and others said they lacked either information or awareness about the problem.

## National Water and Climate Center Web Site Traffic Doubles

In January of this year, the National Water and Climate Center's (NWCC) Website exceeded the customer access rate of one million hits per month. This rate of activity is more than double the amount of last year's January traffic. Customer access continued to increase in February and March, with 1,355,154 hits in March alone. NWCC also provides data to customers via anonymous FTP access. During March 2002 there were 252,882 FTP file downloads - also a two-fold increase from last year.

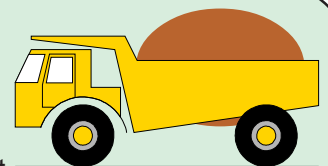
The NWCC Web site provides water supply forecasts for the Western U.S., snowpack information, soil moisture and temperature data from the Soil Climate Analysis Network (SCAN), climate data and analysis, and water quality, hydrology, and water management technology. The increase in access this year may be due in part to the severe drought conditions developing in many parts of the country, especially in the Southwestern U.S. where streamflows are forecast to fall below record minimums. A weekly drought summary can be obtained from the NWCC Web page at [http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/water/w\\_qnty.html](http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/water/w_qnty.html). NWCC also contributes data for the latest drought information provided at <http://drought.unl.edu/dm/index.html>. For more information, contact: Bruce Newton National Water and Climate Center, (503) 414-3055 or visit [bnewton@wcc.nrcs.usda.gov](mailto:bnewton@wcc.nrcs.usda.gov)

## Had a Change of Heart?



If you are currently on our mailing list but no longer want to receive this newsletter, please let us know. Current budget restraints require NRCS to cut costs wherever possible. Please email Kent at [kent.sims@il.usda.gov](mailto:kent.sims@il.usda.gov) to be removed from our list of subscribers. Thanks!

### How much soil erosion occurs from a building site lot?



On a moderately sloping lot that has been stripped of vegetation and left bare from March to October while construction and building is occurring, a site can expect to lose about 5 to 15 tons of soil due to erosion.

Soils high in clay and silt content erode easily. The silt portion usually settles out in roads, ditches, ponds, and lakes. The clay particles stay in suspension in water and can cause a body of water to appear brown and muddy. Soil is too valuable to lose!

*This newsletter is published quarterly by USDA NRCS. Send correspondence, articles, photos, calendar items, or questions to Paige Buck, Conservation and your Community Editor c/o NRCS, 2118 W Park Court, Champaign, IL 61821 or call (217) 353-6606 or email at [paige.buck@il.usda.gov](mailto:paige.buck@il.usda.gov)*

### Would you like to receive *Conservation and Your Community*? Provide us the information below to get on our mailing list!

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Organization/Affiliation

Address

Ph:

Call or send information to Natural Resources Conservation Service, 313 Naperville Road, Suite J, Plainfield, IL 60544 c/o Kent Sims. PH: (815) 577-3597/FX: (815) 577-3608. Email at [kent.sims@il.usda.gov](mailto:kent.sims@il.usda.gov)

# Doing Your Part

By: Della Moen, Stephenson County SWCD, published in  
The Journal Standard, Freeport, Illinois 06/11/02)

Viewing the earth as you travel by jet can be a humbling experience. The earth is so big and you are so small. Even though you know that conservation must be everyone's business, it is hard to know what you can do to make a difference. What follows is a list of some of the things you can do to conserve, improve, and sustain our soil, water, and resources upon which life depends.

- Invite birds and butterflies to your home by planting trees, bushes, and garden plants that provide food and cover.
- Adopt a section of a stream near your home or where you vacation. Keep it clean and help to prevent stream bank erosion by planting appropriate grasses, shrubs, and trees.
- Plan, plant, & care for tree windbreaks around your house, near schools, along lanes and driveways – in the country or in the city.
- Learn about soil surveys from your SWCD. They provide valuable information for property development, gardening, and farming. Remind others to use them.
- Recycle everything you can. Garage sales help. Cooperate with local recycling efforts.
- Always carry a litterbag and use proper receptacles for your trash. Participate with a local group in cleaning up roadsides.
- Suggest conservation presentations and study programs for the groups to which you belong.
- Visit conservation websites when you are surfing the Internet.
- Make mulch with grass clippings and leaves.
- Seek natural ways to protect against insect pests & weeds and use household chemicals according to directions and dispose of them and their containers in a safe manner.
- Observe carefully the quantity necessary if you apply fertilizers. Follow the directions for application of fertilizers and the disposal of containers.
- Support efforts of your Park District to develop natural habitat areas. Use these areas with care, respecting plants & animals living there.
- Talk to youth about conservation issues, informally, whenever you have the opportunity.
- Participate in conservation education activities in your schools and community. SWCDs can explain how you can help.
- Provide your library with a subscription to periodicals that specialize in natural resources and conservation. Ask the librarian to establish a permanent section on environmental improvement and natural resource management.
- If you live along a highway or major thoroughfare, put up a sign that calls attention to conservation practices that can be observed from the road. When out driving, notice conservation signs and observe the SOILS plot just north of Freeport along Highway 26.
- Volunteer your services for conservation efforts of your Park District or Soil and Water Conservation District.

You have probably thought of other ways you can do your part. Remember, no matter how small, each action counts. Working together, we can conserve the precious natural resources upon which our lives depend. Your Soil and Water Conservation District is there to help you in this important effort.



## NRCS Partner Profiles: Chicago Wilderness

The Chicago Wilderness coalition is a collection of public and private organizations who work together to protect biodiversity in the Chicago region. The group was formed to protect land from the threat of urban sprawl and other poorly planned development, which would normally destroy not only the biodiversity, but also the hydrology of the region.

Chicago Wilderness started with a simple idea: Preserving land in its original condition. Formed in 1994 with just 30 original organizations, it grew quickly and now is host to more than 150 organizations. It serves as a regional nature reserve, which currently includes more than 200,000 acres of protected natural lands. The area Chicago Wilderness serves and protects stretches from southeastern Wisconsin, through northeastern Illinois and into northwestern Indiana. Protected lands include forest preserves, state parks, federal lands, county preserves, and privately owned lands.

This regional habitat is home to nearly 200 threatened or endangered species and contains natural communities that are more rare than tropical rainforests. This same area also has the best surviving examples of "wild" found in the Midwest, like eastern tallgrass prairies and open oak woodlands. These wild areas are a great refuge to escape the city to enjoy outdoor activities like hiking, bicycling, canoeing, and cross-country skiing. These special areas also offer a host of non-active, or passive recreational activities such as spotting rare birds and butterflies or participating in organized activities to help residents enjoy and understand the area's unique natural resources.

The constant goal of Chicago Wilderness is to restore the region's natural communities to long term viability, enrich local residents' quality of life, and contribute to the preservation of global biodiversity.

Individuals who would like to contribute to the success of Chicago Wilderness to help protect biodiversity can become a volunteer, a citizen advisor, or simply support legislation and programs that protect and acquire natural lands with state and federally elected representatives. Or just make a difference right at home: Select and plant flowers or shrubs to attract local birds and butterflies, but avoid planting invasive plants like purple loosestrife. Join and support conservation organizations. Get your children involved or become more involved in your child's school activities. And above all, simply share what you know about the importance of nature and biodiversity with others.

Chicago Wilderness is a model of agency and public cooperation; a place that will provide biodiversity and recreational opportunities for the future. It is a place of research to test new techniques for large-scale ecosystems. Evenmore, this natural haven serves as a place for people to explore, relax, learn, and appreciate the wonders of the natural world. Year round, there's always a good reason to get out and explore the Wilderness!

## Illinois Envirothon... (Continued from page 1...)

This year, Illinois' winning team was Taylorville High School in Christian County. What was so inspiring about watching a bunch of kids take tests for two days? The students themselves. Their unbelievably committed teachers and sponsors. Watching them work together; watching their minds work just the way you want a young person's mind to work. Hearing them verbalize their own thoughts and value systems, watching them work together in teams where they knew their own strengths and weaknesses. Seeing such confidence and passion and awareness in young people. These aren't things I get to see every day.

If you are like me, then you read the paper and watch the news. You hear about the delinquents, the drug addicts, the problem adolescents that get so much airtime. But there at the 4-H Camp at Allerton Park in Monticello was a room of young adults who represent the other side—the side we don't always hear about; the side we often wonder about and hope is out there. Rest assured, they ARE out there. They are intelligent, eager, curious, interested, and committed. They listen. They remember. They care. They are thinking of new ways to approach old and new problems. They are creative, fun-loving, driven, goal-oriented, and focused.

I served as a judge on a panel that evaluated teams as they delivered a 15 minute oral presentation on the fifth issue presented this year: invasive species. Each team was made aware of this surprise subject area and given limited information on it the previous evening. They were only allowed 3 hours to review the facts, gather together their own personal data and knowledge of the issue and devise a strategy and prepare their remarks. They are required to define the issue and offer up a feasible, science-based solution to the given dilemma and prepare their own visual aids using simple resources. No internet access. No books. No powerpoint presentations. And all this in three hours. That's not a lot of time. That's pressure! But I watched as these teams rose to the challenge and not only did a remarkable job of addressing the issue, but they found ways to make their presentations interesting, entertaining, captivating, and unique.

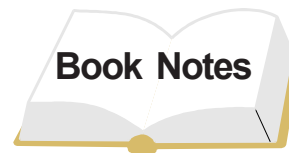
While watching students deliver their remarks, I couldn't help but envision them 10-15 years down the road, working in any corporate setting as part of a team on a big project. The skills they demonstrated were the same skills I would expect to see from older professionals—brainstorming, collaboration, consensus building, conflict management. They all seemed well versed in the scientific facts as well as the social and economic ramifications that always seem to complicate environmental issues.

Many students I visited with were from farm families. Perhaps that was part of the reason they were in-tune with how science, research, laws, and politics impact a family's livelihood because they'd felt it firsthand. How many American school children are involved with or impacted by what their parents do for a living? How many even KNOW what their parents do for a living, much less play a role in it?

When the final test scores and evaluations were tallied, yes, there were winners and losers. Many student teams packed up and went home feeling dejected. But as far as I'm concerned, there wasn't a loser in that room. All those students possess an understanding of the world around them, of the environment, and the value of it and the need to make wise decisions in order to care for it. I believe they know more than the average American.

I admit to being rather cynical about the future. I worry about the condition our world may find itself in years from now. But after sitting in the company of these young adults, I felt better; I feel hopeful. I know that in the sea of adolescents out there, some will grow up to be business executives and lawyers, and most of the rest will work hard, make families, pay taxes and become well fed consumers. But I think I was sitting in the company of the future leaders, shakers, decision-makers and thinkers for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I think I witnessed the "early years" of the people who will be in charge of things when I'm old or taking that long dirt nap. And if that's the case—if these are the people that will be guarding our resources and taking care of things—then I think we can all sleep well tonight.

*The Envirothon is North America's Largest High School Environmental Competition and is sponsored in large part by Canon Corporation. The Mission of the Canon Envirothon® is to develop knowledgeable, skilled and dedicated citizens who are willing to work towards achieving and maintaining a natural balance between the quality of life and the quality of the environment. For more information on how your District or state can become a part of Envirothon, visit [www.envirothon.org](http://www.envirothon.org)*



### **"Field Manual on Sediment and Erosion Control: Best Management Practices for Contractors and Inspectors."**

This book is concise and easy to grasp. If you're really serious about reducing the time and money spent on erosion and sediment control, consider this publication. As the title implies, Field Manual is designed to be used outdoors, on the job site by both contractors and inspectors. Compact, sturdy, and spiral-bound, Field Manual will literally have everyone on the same page. Contractors installing erosion and sediment control measures will be secure in the advance knowledge that they are in compliance with the water-quality, NPDES-related, and other regulatory issues that inspectors are looking for.

Jerald Fifield, Ph.D., CPESC, is the author of "Designing for Effective Sediment and Erosion Control on Construction Sites." He teaches the subject to inspectors, regulators, contractors, and DOTs throughout North America and has decades of in-the-trenches experience.

With page after page of pertinent illustrations, explanations, and relevant diagrams, this book could be much longer, but Fifield has distilled his lifetime of practical, in-the-field knowledge into this highly practical field manual. Keep a copy in each truck in your fleet! Field Manual is available for \$39.95 at [www.ForesterPress.com](http://www.ForesterPress.com)

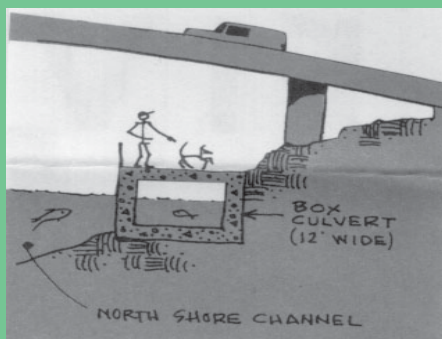


## COOL IDEA!!

Retrofitting older bridges with an under-bridge connection where there is little space under the bridge is a difficult challenge.

Engineering consultants to the City of Chicago have, however, come up with a creative solution that will be demonstrated beneath the Foster Bridge which crosses the North Shore Channel. Consultants at T.Y. Lin International will create enough room for a two-way bike trail by installing a reinforced concrete box culvert alongside the riverbank.

By making the culvert hollow and open-ended on both sides, the culvert will not impede the channel's flow or floodwater capacity even though the culvert will project beyond the bank into the channel.



Found in "The River Reporter,  
Winter 2002

## Illinois Ranks HIGH as a Digital State

A prestigious national study, which ranks states on their utilization of digital technologies to deliver services to citizens, has named Illinois and Kansas as the two best states in the nation.

The fourth annual Digital State Survey, conducted by the Center for Digital Government and The Progress & Freedom Foundation, found Illinois ranked first or near the top in eight digital technology sectors, including e-commerce/business regulation, taxation/revenue, management/administration, GIS/transportation, education, law enforcement and the courts, social services, and digital democracy. In 1998, Illinois was ranked 48th.

NRCS continues to add to the quality digital information available to NRCS clients and to Illinois communities as we work to digitize and distribute digital soils data across the state. "As more communities build and rely on GIS platforms for business and local and county planning, NRCS soils data layers become invaluable," says NRCS State Soil Scientist Bob McLeese. "I'd like to think that all our digital soils effort has helped the state of Illinois achieve this status," adds McLeese.

## Plant Profiles is More User Friendly

Plant Profiles at PLANTS have been improved with added thumbnail distribution maps and navigational aids, and with a "Printer-Friendly Version" that condenses the information on each profile.

Each Plant Profile is now vertically integrated with thumbnail distribution maps for all species within a genus and with clickable links to other genera in the same plant family. Each species shows thumbnail maps for its subspecies or varieties and provides links to genus and family. The result is that you can move easily between the profiles for closely related plants and compare their features. The thumbnail distribution maps help you narrow the possibilities geographically, and clicking on a thumbnail map takes you directly to the Plant Profile for that plant. You can also right-click on a thumbnail to save it on your computer, and then use it in documents. In addition, the updated Plant Profile provides quick access to all images of the relevant genus that are in the Gallery. To see these new features, go to the Plants Name Search at <http://plants.usda.gov> and do a "symbol" search for "PINUS."

Plant Profiles offers a new "Printer-Friendly Version." The document that results from selection of this option presents the essential profile information without links and other information that are irrelevant in a printed document. To view an example, go to the Plants Name Search at <http://plants.usda.gov>, do a "symbol" search for "PIAR," and then select *Pinus aristata* (bristlecone pine). The resulting Plant Profile shows a printer icon labeled "Printer-Friendly Version."

For more information, contact: Scott Peterson at the National Plant Data Center, (225) 775-6280, [scott.peterson@usda.gov](mailto:scott.peterson@usda.gov)

## Places to Visit . . .

### NRCS' Plant Materials Center, Elsberry, MO



The Plant Materials Center, or "PMC," is one of 26 such centers located in the U.S. The PMC's mission is to develop and transfer effective, state-of-the-art plant sciences technology to meet customer and resource needs.

The Center evaluates, develops, and tests new and traditional plant species of trees, forbs, grasses, and other plants. They help test species to determine which can withstand heavy foot traffic, high salt levels, extensive flooding, and other conditions we humans are known for putting our plants through.

You can visit the center by calling (573) 898-2012 or visit the Center via their website at [Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov](http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov)



### **Illinois NRCS Community Assistance Vision**

*To provide Illinois communities, units of government, and other clients with quality NRCS products and services that balance land development needs with natural resource conservation issues. This goal will be accomplished by a NRCS network of professional teams working together to address significant community issues*

### **Newsletter Highlights:**



- ***Farmland Protection Funds***
- ***Chicago Wilderness***
- ***Green Roofs...?***